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Delaware launches statewide victim notification program

Victims can track offenders at every custody level

Dover, De. – Delaware citizens now have access to offender custody information at every level of the criminal justice system from probation to long-term incarceration. Governor Ruth Ann Minner joined state and local officials in Dover to announce that VINE® (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) is now available across the state, giving victims and their families immediate access to custody status information.

“Being more informed always makes people feel safer,” said Governor Minner. “There is so much more than simply knowing someone is in custody. It’s knowing where they are 24 hours a day. It’s also about reducing that fear and making sure victims move forward with their lives instead of dwelling on what happened to them.”

Delaware is among 44 states implementing VINE through Appriss, the Kentucky technology company that created the service in 1994. But unlike other states, Delaware can track offenders at every custody level.

“It’s a unique feature that’s only in Delaware,” said Nicole Wilson, VINE coordinator with Delaware Criminal Justice Information System (DELJIS.) “We have an integrated system with all of the correctional facilities that gives victims and their families the ability to monitor level one to level five offenders.”

VINE users can register for notification upon a custody status change by calling (877) DE8-VINE or going on line at www.vinelink.com. Notifications will be sent by phone or e-mail.

Among those attending the news conference was Debra Puglisi Sharp who drew national attention when a local factory worker shot and killed her husband and raped and kidnapped her in 1998. She was held captive in the attacker’s home for five days before she was able to call police and escape. Puglisi Sharp now speaks across the country encouraging crime victims to rebuild their lives.

“I’m proud to stand before you today excited that VINE is now available in Delaware,” said Puglisi Sharp. “If they move my attacker or if he escapes, I would want to be the first person notified.”

VINE is being funded by a Federal grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. BJA is working to create a National Victim Notification Network. Since 2005, the SAVIN grant program has nearly doubled the number of states providing automated victim notification.

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